

Meal Counting Procedures

By Julie Sutton

The USDA Midwest Regional Office completed reviews of 18 School Food Authorities (SFAs) across the region during the last school year. As a result they have expressed concern that SFAs were using inadequate meal counting methods. Please use the following guidance to determine if your SFA is using an adequate meal counting method. If an inadequate meal counting method is discovered as a result of a review conducted by the State Agency, meals will be disallowed and you will lose reimbursement for those meals.

Meals must be counted at that point in the food service operation where it can be accurately determined that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible student.

There are several different ways to count meals served by category each day. Your procedures must ensure that meals counted: (1) meet the menu planning option requirements, (2) are served to eligible students, and (3) are counted daily by category. Examples of acceptable systems include:

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“Kids First” in Brown County

By Carole Diehm

The back-to-school challenge means new marketing concepts for food service staff, but from where are the ideas going to come? Students top the list of resources. “Without those kids, we don’t have a job,” said Julie Spiece, Cafeteria Manager at Brown County High School. She was working on a lunch line that includes at least five entrees, several sides and three varieties of milk. This attitude of “KIDS FIRST” seems to prevail in Brown County schools, and was very noticeable this past spring when I evaluated their efforts to meet dietary guidelines through the Numenus option. This attitude is largely responsible for the increased lunch participation in the Brown County School Corporation. Many Food Service Directors agree it takes such an attitude to operate a successful National School Lunch Program, make Numenus work, and meet the dietary guidelines. **Numenus** is only one of the four menu planning options available to school corporations. The other options include **Assisted Numenus** (nutrient-based, as is Numenus, but menus and nutrient analyses are prepared outside the school corporation), **Enhanced Food-Based Menu Plan (EFBMP)**, and the **Traditional Meal Pattern**.

Sharon Wilkerson, Food Service Director, most enjoys the freedom of Numenus menu planning. Student lunches are no longer “married and true” to the traditional 2 ounces of meat/meat alternate, CN labels, or specific amounts of fruit, vegetables, and bread. For these reasons, Numenus seems a good fit with offering choices. As long as the food fits into an entree category, a side dish, or milk, it can be part of the reimbursable meal. Sharon concedes that menus still look “pretty much the same, but I am very aware of the differences.” She goes on to

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Show Us a Creative Nutrition Unit...

By Suzette Hartmann

Show us a creative nutrition unit and we'll show you the money!!! Included in this issue of the *A to Z* is a brochure announcement for the Golden Apple Nutrition Education Award. This award recognizes a teacher who uses creative and innovative ideas to teach nutrition in the classroom. Teachers may apply by submitting an original nutrition unit with five classroom activities.

By encouraging a teacher at your school to apply, you will be promoting the food service department as a partner in education.

Here is our "top ten" list of reasons why teachers should apply:

1. \$400 in cash!
2. \$100 in Dairy Council materials!
3. A beautiful plaque to make co-workers jealous!
4. Receive your 15 minutes of fame!
5. You will become the standard for excellence!
6. Get kudos from your school principal!
7. Everyone will come to you for nutrition advice!
8. Your unit will be distributed to other teachers!
9. You will want to collect apple knickknacks!
10. You might get to say "Show Me the Money!"

Attention:

Purdue University is planning to do an evaluation of the nutrient quality of school lunches. They want to make comparisons of quality with characteristics of the schools and education of the menu planners. A questionnaire will be mailed to schools in late August.

Contracts

By Sharon Cook

The Child Nutrition Contracts were mailed to all School Nutrition Programs sponsors the week of June 7, 1999. If you have not received your copy or cannot locate your copy, please notify our office. The Program Information Schedule will be mailed November 1, 1999. There will be some changes in the schedule this year, so please be sure to review it carefully.

Healthy Edge Training

As part of the Healthy Edge Training held on July 7, 1999, conducted by Sara Gasiorowski of the M.S.D. of Wayne Township, school food service staff create food pyramids using pipe cleaners. Pictured below are Karen Akers, Eva Fulford, and Janet Davenport.



Meal Counting Procedures

1. Roster systems including coded/uncoded rosters, number lists, and class lists
2. Coded ticket/token systems with various ticket procedures
3. Automated tab tickets
4. Bar-coded and magnetic strip cards
5. Coded ID cards used in manual and automated system
6. Verbal Identifiers using a student name or number

Any of the meal count systems chosen must provide a POINT OF SERVICE count:

Of reimbursable meals served (one per eligible student per day)

By type (free, reduced-price, and paid)

Each day

Without overtly identifying students' eligibility categories

Meal Count Systems that are NOT acceptable include the following:

Attendance Counts - using the number of students in attendance as a meal count.

Tray or Entree Counts

Classroom Counts

Counts taken anywhere other than the point of service

Cash converted to meals

Category/cash back-out systems - one or more meal categories are calculated by subtracting the number of meals of one or more categories (free, reduced-price, or paid) from the total meal count to get a count of another meal category.

Delivery Counts of meals produced off-site

For more details on acceptable systems, please refer to the [Meal Counting and Claiming Manual](#) published by USDA. If you have further questions, please contact Julie Sutton at (800) 537-1142 or locally at (317) 232-0850.

"Kids First" in Brown County

explain, "Some foods that students particularly appreciate, such as chips or ice cream, are no longer considered an 'extra' as they are on the traditional meal pattern or EFBMP, but are counted as a side and are part of the reimbursable meal." Down the road, this freedom may result in less waste of food and money. Sharon also appreciates the documented information available when she analyzes her Numenus through a computer software program. The nutrient printouts are her best documentation that Brown County cafeterias are serving healthful meals. Numenus is a lot of work initially, "lots of hours, and lots of trial and error," admits Sharon, "particularly when several entrees are offered every day at elementary, junior high and senior high levels, but that's what the kids want." Putting "KIDS FIRST" means some other things have to come in second, third, and even tenth, but increased participation is a significant reward. She believes each year Numenus will become less laborious as more ingredients, recipes, and menu cycles are entered into the database. As she becomes more familiar with the concepts, and learns a few more tricks of the Numenus trade, more time will be available for menu research and planning. Sharon is convinced that no one has all the answers, but she's happy to share and discuss her experiences. You may call her at 812/988-6607.

USDA Mailings

By Diane Rice

Numerous school systems in Indiana reported that they have NOT received the last five books sent direct by USDA since 1996. Apparently outdated addresses were used. Insuring that the State Agency has your correct mailing address including a street location is very important because UPS will not deliver to a P.O. Box. Please check to be certain your SFA has one each of the materials listed below. The material is bound in very colorful ring binders about two inches thick. If these items were not received, please contact Diane Rice toll free at (800) 537-1142 or locally at (317) 232-0850. She will place an order for you and confirm the mailing address.

1. Serving It Safe
2. Choice Plus
3. A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals (one per kitchen)
4. Cooking a World of New Tastes
5. A Guide for Purchasing Foodservice Equipment

Egg Safety

By Jane E. Regnier

The egg is one of nature's most nutritious, economical and versatile foods. With proper care and handling, it poses no greater risk than any other perishable food. The inside of the egg was once considered sterile, but recently a bacterial organism, *Salmonella enteritidis*, has been found inside some eggs. Only a small number of eggs may contain the bacteria. If the egg does contain the organism, the numbers in a freshly laid egg probably will be small and, if the eggs are promptly refrigerated, will not multiply enough to cause illness in a healthy person. Eggs are washed and sanitized before they are packed, and eggs should not be re-washed before use.

Many general rules for safe food handling are the same in a food service setting as they are in your home. However, in a food service operation the degree of risk is higher because of the greater number of eggs and people involved. Eggs are often improperly pooled (broken together) and allowed to stand at room temperature for a considerable time.

Refrigeration, the first step in proper egg handling, retards bacterial growth and maintains the quality of eggs.

- ✓ Buy eggs only from refrigerated cases and maintain a temperature of 40°F or below.
- ✓ Shell eggs and egg mixtures should be refrigerated before and after cooking.
- ✓ Do not leave eggs in any form at room temperature for more than 2 hours including preparation and serving.
- ✓ Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers promptly after serving to cool quickly.
- ✓ Use only clean, unbroken eggs. Discard dirty and broken eggs.
- ✓ Avoid mixing the shell with the egg's contents.
- ✓ Leave eggs in their original container in a colder section of the refrigerator, not in the door.

Adequate cooking assures that egg dishes reach a temperature high enough to destroy any bacteria which may be present. Although there are visual indications for determining the doneness of cooked dishes, the only accurate measurement is with a thermometer. *Salmonella* organisms will not survive if held at a temperature of 140°F for 3½ minutes or if they reach an end-point temperature of 160°F.

- ✓ The internal temperature of fully-baked goods and hard-cooked eggs will easily reach more than 160°F by the time they are done.
- ✓ Quiches, baked custards, and most casseroles are done when a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.
- ✓ Casseroles which are thick and heavy and contain cheese (ex. Lasagne) must be checked with a thermometer. They should reach an end-point of 160°F.
- ✓ Cook scrambled eggs, omelets and French toast until the eggs are thickened and no visible liquid egg remains.
- ✓ Cook fried eggs slowly until the whites are completely set and the yolks begin to thicken but are not hard. Baste the eggs, turn them over or cover with a lid to cook both sides.
- ✓ For soft-cooked eggs, bring eggs and water to a boil. Turn off heat. Cover and let stand about 4 to 5 minutes. Hard-cooked eggs need to stand 15 to 20 minutes.
- ✓ Pie meringues require a precise combination of oven temperature and cooking time. A 3-egg-white pie meringue put on a hot filling and baked at 350°F should reach 160°F in about 15 minutes. Meringues containing a larger number of egg whites will require 25 to 30 minutes at 325°F. Refrigerate meringue pies until serving.

When serving infants, pregnant women, the elderly, the ill or the immuno-compromised, cook all egg dishes thoroughly or use a pasturized egg product. Commercially prepared mayonnaise, eggnog, frozen entrees, ice cream, powdered eggs, meringue powder, powdered sauce bases, dried egg white, and egg substitutes are all made from pasteurized eggs and are suitable for special risk audiences.

References: U.S.D.A. Food and Safety Inspection Service
The National Food Safety Database: Egg Handling Handbook
American Egg Board

Severe Need Breakfast

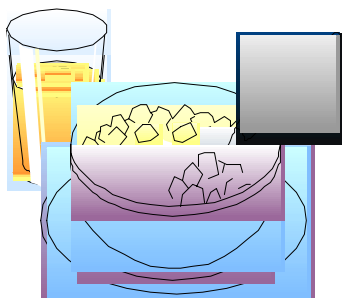
By Sharon Cook

Did you know that some of the schools in your corporation may be eligible for additional reimbursement for the School Breakfast Program if the school meets the following criteria?

1. If the school is participating in or desiring to initiate the School Breakfast Program.
2. If 40 percent or more of the lunches served to students at the school in the second preceding school year (1997-1998) were served free or at a reduced-price; and
3. If the reimbursement rate per meal established by the Secretary of Agriculture is insufficient to cover the costs of the School Breakfast Program.

If any of your schools meet all of the above criteria, you may apply for severe need breakfast rates by sending a letter to our office with the name of the school(s), and percentage of students served who received free or reduced-price meal benefits from the second preceding school year (1997 - 1998) and the documented costs per breakfast meal.

If you have received severe need reimbursement this past school year, it is necessary that you reapply for this coming school year.



Verification Time

By Sharon Cook

Although the required sample size under both random and focused sampling is based on the number of approved applications on file on October 31, School Food Authorities may begin verification before this date. SFAs may project the number of approved applications that they anticipate will be on file on October 31, based on their experience. However, the SFA must compare this estimate with the actual number of applications on file on October 31. The sample size must be increased if the total number of approved applications on file exceeds the estimate.

SFAs may verify more than the required minimum sample (up to 100 percent of all approved applications) as long as the selection of applications does not involve discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or disability.

THE SFA HAS AN OBLIGATION TO VERIFY ALL QUESTIONABLE APPLICATIONS.

However, any verification for cause is in addition to the sample required for either random or focused sampling.

The SFA must complete the verification process for all households that have been notified of their selection for verification and have been asked to submit verification information.

When calculating sample sizes, round all fractions or decimals upward to the nearest whole number.

Remember, the verification process must be completed by December 15. If you need to request an extension, it must be received in our office by December 1.

USDA Encourages Schools to Offer Lactose-Free Milk

*By Beth Foland MS RD CD
& Jerrie P. Newton MS RD CD*

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging schools to make lactose-free milk available to students. A large percentage of Americans, particularly minorities, are lactose intolerant, a disorder that restricts an individual's ability to digest milk sugar. "In our school meals programs, we're seeing more and more children who are lactose intolerant," said Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman.

Officials are concerned that lactose-intolerant students are missing out on calcium due to an inability to consume milk and other dairy products. Simply giving the students juice instead of milk to drink with meals does not supply the same nutrients as does milk. Dairy foods make a unique contribution to growth and development in children by providing significant amounts of calcium, riboflavin, phosphorus, magnesium, vitamins A and D, and protein.

Currently, lactose intolerance does not appear to be an issue in most Indiana schools. We are, however, aware that Indiana's population is becoming more diverse. Asian and Spanish-speaking populations are growing rapidly. Research indicates that lactose intolerance affects 95% of Asian-Americans, 65% of African-Americans, 65% of American Indians, and 50% of Hispanics. The intolerance is present in only about 15% of non-Hispanic whites.

USDA is also encouraging State Agencies to promote the purchase of alternative types of milk such as chocolate and strawberry-flavored and lactose-free milk when appropriate. While schools are not required to purchase lactose-free milk, they may do so. Lactose-free milk is available in half-pints (usually from vendors only) and quarts at grocery stores and is usually more expensive than regular whole milk.

Schools may make food substitutions, at their discretion, for individual students who do not have a disability, but who are medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. Please see pages 5, 6, and 7 of **Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs in the School Nutrition Programs**.

What is lactose intolerance?

Individuals who complain of gas, stomach bloating, abdominal pain, and diarrhea between 30 minutes to an hour or so after consuming dairy-rich foods may be experiencing lactose intolerance. This occurs when there are insufficient amounts of the enzyme lactase. Lactase is what breaks down lactose (a form of sugar in dairy products) into simpler forms of sugar which can be absorbed by the body.

Although lactase activity is high during infancy, a normal and permanent loss of this enzyme occurs in the majority of the world's population. When less of the enzyme is available, the body no longer comfortably digests the amounts of milk and dairy products previously handled. Diagnosis of the intolerance should be documented by a licensed medical authority.

Solutions

Individuals have varying degrees of lactose intolerance. While some may comfortably digest small amounts of dairy products, others may need to be more restrictive in what they eat.

It is important to recognize that children need the benefits of dairy foods even if they have lactose intolerance. The following suggestions may help:

- **Avoid large helpings of dairy products at one time**
- **Drink or eat dairy products with a meal**
- **Eat smaller servings, but increase the number of servings per day**
- **Try cultured and enzyme-containing products such as yogurt, buttermilk, and sweet acidophilus milk**
- **Sometimes the flavored milks (strawberry, chocolate) are better tolerated**

If these suggestions don't help, there are many digestive aids found in drugstores and grocery stores which are very effective in relieving symptoms. Some stores even have their own brand.

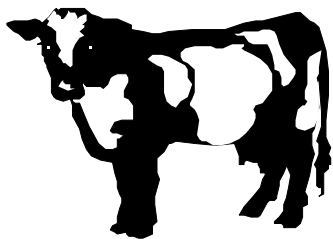
- **Lactaid liquid drops, chewable tablets, original and extra-strength caplets**
- **Dairy Ease chewable tablets**

Dairy cases in grocery stores contain a variety of reduced-lactose and lactose-free milk and cheese products. Some examples are:

- **Lactaid 100 (some reduced-fat, some fat-free, some calcium fortified, all lactose-free)**
- **Sweet acidophilus reduced-fat milk**
- **One large grocery chain has its own brand of lactose-free milk**

Students don't necessarily have to give up favorite dairy foods just because they're lactose intolerant. If they watch what they eat and how much of it they eat, they may find that their body can do the job all by itself.

References: "Lactose Intolerance", Mayo Clinic Health Letter, February, 1997
"Most Frequently Asked Questions About Lactose Intolerance" Nutrition Today, Volume 31, No. 2, March/April 1996.
"USDA Encourages Schools To Offer Lactose-free Milk", Community Nutrition Institute, Nutrition Week, Volume xxix, No. 25, July 2, 1999.
"How Much Lactose is Low Lactose?" Journal of the American Dietetic Association, Volume 96, No. 3, March, 1996



Coming Soon: New Lending Library

By Diane Rice

The State Agency has always had many videos and books available for school food service personnel to use in training staff or for self study. Revision of the outdated 1995 listing is almost complete and will be sent to all SFAs in September. SFAs may arrange to borrow items from the library by contacting Diane Rice or Annette Smith toll free at (800) 537-1142 or locally at (317) 232-0850. Requests will be accepted via FAX at (317) 232-0855 or by regular mail service. Requests may be submitted to Diane Rice via e-mail at <drice@doe.state.in.us>.

Senator Richard G. Lugar Award

By Diane Rice

Once again the Division of School and Community Nutrition Programs will be seeking nominations for the Senator Richard G. Lugar School Food Service Employee of the Year. An information brochure containing contest instructions will be sent to all schools this fall. We encourage anyone to nominate an outstanding employee from their school. Nominations will be accepted until late January 2000. If there are questions about the award, please contact Diane Rice toll free at (800) 537-1142 or locally at (317) 232-0850.

New Food Service Directors

By Diane Rice

In September the State Agency will be sending invitations for all new food service directors to attend a one-day orientation on **Tuesday, October 19, 1999**. This will be an opportunity to meet some of our staff and hear how the State Agency fits into your school food service operation. Topics such as menu planning requirements, financial reporting, reviews, technical assistance, and nutrition education will be presented. Mark your calendars now.



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